

Womenpower: The Presence Of Women In Management, Politics And Academics In Argentina And Worldwide

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Abstract

An overview of the present situation and the future trends of women in different management positions is reviewed, including their working profile, educational trends, performance in organizations, entrepreneurship and copreneurship, current national laws ,opportunities in the job place and prospectives, in Argentina and worldwide.

Keywords: Working women, education, performance, entrepreneurship, opportunities

Resumen

Se presenta un panorama de la situación actual y las tendencias futuras de las mujeres en diferentes posiciones de trabajo, incluyendo su perfil laboral, tendencias educacionales, desempeño en las organizaciones, emprendedurismo y coemprendedurismo, legislación vigente, oportunidades en el lugar de trabajo y las perspectivas futuras, en Argentina y el resto del mundo.

Palabras clave: Mujeres que trabajan, educación, desempeño, emprendedurismo, oportunidades

Best and worst countries to live in for women

According to a recent study of BAV Consulting and Wharton School from Pennsylvania University, presented at the Davos World Economic Forum (2016), the best countries are:

Denmark, Sweden, Canada, Holland and Australia.

And the worst:

Argelia and Pakistan

The survey was applied to 7000 women, with the following criteria:

1.Human rights; 2. Genre equality; 3. Equal pay; 4. Safety and 5. Progress

The world of the working woman

As presented in a report of Gabriela Catterberg (/Desarrollo%20Humano/Argentina-PNUD-INDH%20), although there have been important modifications, the horizontal segregation still persists, as certain occupations are considered emblematically feminine, such as domestic service, assistance to persons, teaching and secretarial activities. And vertical segregation, as the concentration in positions of lesser hierarchy, even if they have the same qualifications as the males in those jobs. However, she recognizes the greater acceptance of working mothers in the labor market, but they assume more heterogeneous tasks than men, who enjoy a more limited time distribution, meanwhile the former take care in a 75% of the offspring.

According to Ñopo et al. (2011), even with a higher education level, in Latin America women earn less, around 10%, compared to men but this gap can reach 22% when other variables are taken into account, such as home care, number of children , type of job or amount of hours of work per day. And these differences are more significant for poorer females.

The gap tends to be also greater in part time jobs, smaller firms, self-employment or in the services sector. Good news are that between 1996 and 2011 the difference was reduced in a 4-5%., and the rate of feminine participation increased a 20% in the last 20 years. And another needed initiative is to provide childcare facilities in the organizations. The maternity leave legislation provides 90 paydays and not paid extensions (3-6 months) for child care.

The worker can opt for 45 days before and 24 after childbirth , but the mandatory leave is of at least 30 days before. (www.elsalario.com.ar/main/trabajo-decente/maternidad-e-hijos)As for paternity, the present law grants two paydays for paternity, although current labor agreements tend to be more benevolent and a possible extension for 5 to 30 days is been discussed in the Congress. (thomsonreuterslatam.com/2015/.../licencias-por-paternidad-y-maternidad)

“The Global Gender Gap Index 2015 ranks 145 economies according to how well they are leveraging their female talent pool, based on economic, educational, health-based and political indicators. With a decade of data, this edition of the Global Gender Gap Report – first published in 2006 – shows that while the world has made progress overall, stubborn inequalities remain”. This report indicates that the gap diminished a 4% in 10 years on health, education, economic opportunities and political representation .Argentina occupies the 35th. Post in the ranking , meanwhile

Islandia is 1st. followed by two Nordic countries, the USA is 28th and is better than Brazil, 85th. If the trend, stagnant since 2010, continues as such, it will take 118 years to the worldwide closing of the gap, in 2133!

Raquel Saralegui (La Nacion, september 27, 2015) reports in an article in this newspaper that there is a scarce 23% of women occupying management positions in Argentina and 29%, demonstrating the still present resistance of the “crystal ceiling”.

But Mabel Bianco, President of the Foundation for Women’s Study and Research (Clarín, November 20) affirms that we do not have to wait till 2133, and if we analyze all the corresponding items, Argentina is much worse in the economic breach, descends to the 105th place! She stresses to attend the non paid care tasks of children, elder and disabled persons handled by women in the home, and while these responsibilities fall on them without governmental help, such as child day care centers, the limitations for their progress will persist.

The equality of sexes is a basic requisite for the development of a society, and not a sole feminine problem. Also, the access to a quality education, increasing specially the access to technological areas, is a key factor. Finally, it is essential that all women have a right to sexual and reproductive health resource

Some important statistics: (Corral, S., 2011)

62,2% of working mothers

Feminine unemployment: 8,6%

47, 1% of working or work seeking women (28% in 1980)

(INDEC-National Institute of Statistics and Census, Argentina, 2015)

Educational trends

“Even they are the half, only of every four scientists becomes a chief”, at the Conicet (National Council of Scientific and Technical Research), according to Dora Barrancos, member of the Directory (Roman, V., 2015).

Presently, women represent the 52% of the pool of 8.505 investigators but the 57% is in the bottom of the pyramid and only 25% has a superior category. This means that they trained human resources, produced significant research projects and obtained international recognition. And she continues: *“Many times*

it is not acknowledged that they have lower opportunities to develop their professional career as they are in charge of the homework chores and the care of the offspring and other relatives. So, frequently they limit themselves and don’t dare to occupy leadership positions.” This situation might be aggravated when the husbands, parents or other relatives behave enviously or competitively

But Diana Maffia (www.ragcyt.org.ar/publicaciones ,Argentine Net of Genre, Science and Technology, 2014) reminds that in the past, the situation was much worse, as in 1994, only 8% was in the superior category and presently there is maternity leave for fellows as well as medical coverage. And the age limit to opt for a doctorate scholarship was extended to 34 if she has two children and to 35 for 3 or more.

Meanwhile, UNESCO reports a 30% of women scientists worldwide and 45% in Latin America, taking the first place internationally (14% in Japan and 27% in Germany).

So, we can consider that the situation described above is in general paradigmatic of the educational trends in this country. Moreover, *“the general image of statistics indicates an advantage in favor of women. A long term look confirms the reversion of gaps in the last decades...and the extension of these differences can be attributed not only to the greater access and attendance of women to the secondary level, but also to the better indicators of their promotion and graduation... and is worth to consider the progressive feminization of the enrollment in the successive years of secondary studies...meanwhile they represent the 48,6% in the 1st year, they are the 49,2% in the second, 51,1% in the third, 52, 2% in the fourth, 54, 2% in the fifth and 55,6% in the 6th and last. In the same direction, they are the 51,2% of the total secondary school enrollment and the 58,1% of graduates, according to the 2013 Statistical Yearbook of the Ministry of Education”*. (Bottinelli, Leandro, *Mujeres educación en Argentina* Unipe.edu.ar/blog/mujeres-y-educacion-en-argentina/, 20

Performance in organizations

“They are more than 50% of the university enrollment and represent the 40% of the economically active population in Argentina and they are owners or managers in half of the industrial small businesses. But when they intend to start a business, they find more difficulties to ask for and obtain financing. So, most of the businesses run by women in Latin America don’t live through the microenterprise or can’t overcome the informal economy” (Indice del Entorno Empresarial, Business Environment Index, 2013 ,www.iadb.org/document.cfm?id=3789455)

Although gender equality appears to be on the forefront of political and social issues in Argentina, the country still experiences significant gender inequalities in large corporations. Argentina’s achievements on behalf of women in local politics are notable. It is the first country in Latin America to adopt a system of political quotas requiring all political parties to include a minimum of 30 percent female candidates on ballot lists in national elections. Argentina had re-elected its female president, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, for a second term in 2011, replaced by Mauricio Macri in 2015.

According to the Grant Thornton International Business Report, women in Argentina hold 18 percent of senior management positions in corporations. While overall this percentage is underwhelming and reflects only a slight improvement over the previous two years in which women represented 17 percent of senior management in 2009- 2010, it also reflects a notable improvement from 2007, when women occupied only 10 percent of senior management position. When focusing exclusively on large Argentine companies however, the percentage declines dramatically: women represent only 4.4 percent of senior management, 6 percent of board seats and 3 percent of general management positions. Further, while the percentage of women in corporate leadership may be growing, surveys indicate that the percentage of companies without any women in senior management has risen to 51 percent in 2011, from 47 percent in 2009. Only 8 percent of private companies in Argentina have a female CEO, however, this percentage is consistent with the percentage of women CEOs in most countries worldwide.

Women in government and politics

After a severe national crisis in 2001- 2002, Nestor Kirchner assumed the Argentine presidency in 2003 and obtained satisfactory results till his death in 2007, being replaced at that year by his wife and Vice president , Cristina Fernandez, as the second women to assume to this position. This broke up a long masculine political tradition, as another example of the growing feminine influence in the world, and she was elected for a new 4 year term in 2011.

Accustomed to power and displaying an authoritarian leadership, in 2013 she intended to modify the Constitution under the motto of “the eternal Cristina”, for indefinite reelections, but it was rejected. Anyway, she stuck to an sole style till the last day of her mandate. During the last 12 years, the peronist party was dominated by the “kirchnerism” , as their orientation was denominated, but presently it is fragmented and in search of new directions.

This term leaves a heavy economic legacy for the new government , with limited central bank reserves, a poverty rate nearing 30% according to the Survey of Social Debt of the Catholic University (fortunaweb.com.ar/2015-07-14-163899-para-la-uca-el-nivel-de-pobreza), and an annual inflation rate over 25%.

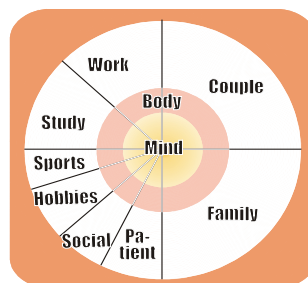
But in October 2015, an unexpected and impressive change took place, as Maria Eugenia Vidal, a representative of the opposition party “*Cambiamos*” (“*Let’s change*”) won the Government of the largest province of this country, till then a peronist and male stronghold. This was a great accolade for the elected President , Mauricio Macri, and his Vice president, also a woman: Gabriela Michetti. The previous remaining two presidential candidates did not include women in their highest cadres.

They only appeared in public with their wives, which probably had some influence on their defeat, taking account of the feminine voters. Finally, on November 22 the leader of “Cambiemos”, Mauricio Macri was elected for President and a new era commenced for Argentina.

Presently in Argentina 37% of Parliament Deputies are feminine and 39% Senators.

The contribution of Transactional Analysis to women's life programs: Behavior Areas and Fundamental Roles: conflict, harmony and synergy

In our Private Institute of Medical Psychology we have applied this model to establish the Present State and the and the Desired State for each of its 8 items; Mind, Body and the 8 Fundamental Roles, to over 10.000 patients



and students in 12 countries of Latin America and in Spain. The spaces in the diagram are not fixed and depend of the time devoted to each Role. Eric Berne (1910-1970), creator of Transactional Analysis or TA (1964), stated that every person is “programmed” in childhood by his or her family, and so the child generates a “*life script*”, similar to the literary ones, in his first 8 years, which is decided and later forgotten, but enacted through the later stages of existence. And it includes instructions for our thoughts, inner images, behaviors and Roles: do's and don'ts.

Figure 1: Behavior Areas and Fundamental Roles

This “story” is encouraged by parents and other family members, whose life scripts were also shaped by their parents... and so on, till Adam and Eve. In this way, we become a product of our family's history and social system. Likewise, our scripts are also woven by cultural and national forces, all of which provides some kind of direction to fulfill our needs... but this has the price of giving up part of our autonomy and authenticity. For rewriting our story we can appeal to rededcision therapy, also initiated by Berne, (1973) where it is possible to examine the verbal and non verbal messages we received in the past, and identify what is not working, with the help of a trained therapist or coach. It is scary as we get out of the protective umbrella, get wet sometimes, and explore our own decisions, but also exciting to develop a new identity. Which will provide to us new types of relationships and experiences, but keeping what is useful and valuable from our past.

The different Roles might be played in **conflict** with some other / s, as when a mother of several children and housewife has to work for her subsistence, a jealous husband is opposed to late meetings of his spouse in the organization, to the practice of sports in public gyms vs. the prohibition “showing her bodies” from her mates (the inverse was also observed, but less frequently).

Or a son is invited to collaborate in the family business with a competitive father. In *harmony* as all of them function smoothly and in *synergy* if one is reinforcing another, for instance with copreneurs.

Details of the definition of script : • Script is a life plan. • Script is directed towards a payoff. • Script is decisional. • Script is reinforced by parents. • Script is outside awareness. • Reality is redefined to justify the script. [script.\(es.slideshare.net/manumjoy/life-scripts-definitions\)](http://es.slideshare.net/manumjoy/life-scripts-definitions)

The early concept of Berne was psychopathological, considering that he script was some kind of trance state and that the parental recordings were unchangeable, and the only option to overcome them, was to supplant the Parent ego State by the Adult (see below about ego States).

After some 50 years, in our opinion the optimal approach is to accept that we all undergo an early educational programming , with adequate and inadequate aspects, and that we have the possibility of analyzing it and keeping what is constructive and discarding what is not, usually with some professional help.

But all this is recorded in the past and related partially to the medical model of pathology. The more recent approach of *coaching* (Cox et al, 2011, Hawkins and Smith, 2013, Kertész, 2015, Williams and Menendez, 2007), directed to facilitate the personal development with a future orientation , is diametrically opposite to the script concept, but can and should be integrated in a new and constantly evolving life plan, specifically in the case of working women.

Sex role scripting in men and woman (Hogie Wickoff, in Steiner, 1974)

*“As women and men we are socialized to develop certain parts of our personalities while suppressing the development of other parts...this stilted and repetitive way of acting in life has been referred to as **banal scripting**...-classically , a man is supposed to be rational, productive and hardworking , but not emotional,in touch with his feeling, or overtly loving...on the other hand, a women is not supposed to think rationally, be able to balance the checkbook, or be powerful...women are trained to accept the mystification that they are incomplete. Inadequate and dependent...*

(This reminds us about the myth of Eve’s creation from one of Adam's ribs, to be his companion, and the prejudiced and as most of

Freud's theories, indemonstrable penis envy by girls, criticised mostly by feminists as it was seen as misogynistic.

It might seem paradoxical to include this material in a book intended to recognize the achievements of professional women worldwide and also updated, but maybe it could be a good reminder of their past tribulations, and so, a homage to their accomplishments.

And after the impressive changes of the last 50 years regarding the evolution of women as professionals, academics, politicians, or in the military, at least in Latin America, we have witnessed the envy of some of their more limited mothers and also male chauvinist fathers or husbands. In these cases, we recommend our clients to attribute their achievements to their parents and to the presence of the mates, usually producing good results. And in some cases we prescribe some minor self-punishment, to placate the competitive or phobic inner Parent!

Entrepreneurs and copreneurs

In Susan Garcia-Robles, (Clarín, 2015) an Argentine Catholic University graduate and MBA of Columbia University's opinion, there are a lot of prejudices regarding the way women negotiate or lead projects, especially, entrepreneurs, which in many cases produce better results than men. She runs Webchange, an encounter platform for entrepreneurs of Latin America, who in her opinion lack the support of more professional mentors that might include them in a world owned principally by men, and provide investors. She organized a forum in Mexico called "*Unafraid to dream, unafraid of failure*" in November 20, centered in the need to plan their projects with financial help. Besides, few women choose scientific or technological careers, which might originate high level enterprises, with global reach and financial support. Instead, they tend to more traditional roles, related to the tertiary sector: education, food, decoration, commerce, tourism, care of persons, sanitary, commerce, leisure, administration.

Garcia-Robles (op cit.) also recommends to transcend the mere relatives or friendly contacts and to dare to seek the advice and partnership of persons with greater professional expertise, selling oneself better, produce an attractive public profile. "*So I tell them: How is your profile in Facebook or Twitter? Which photos are you including? Do you have a blog?...We have to think big.... to find our voice and have it heard. Men tell their story easier...So I would like us to be the director of our motion picture, to make our dreams come true*".

A fascinating issue is that of copreneurship, composed by couples or "couplepreneurs": (partners or marriages) who cooperate in two domains: their bond and business:

“Copreneurs face issues that might not come up when working alone. There are complicated interpersonal dynamics and they’re hard for some couples to navigate. When you partner with a friend, you work to preserve the friendship, and you get to go home separately at the end of the day. When you’re a married couple who share a business, you have to keep your love intact, and you have to go home together! You might be raising children together as well, which adds another potential wrinkle to the mix. Ultimately, you need optimum communication skills so that you’re both getting what you need to thrive. And, you need to stay focused on a common goal- running a successful business”.(Garcia-Robles, op.cit)

Maria Naranjo (Pymes journal, august 2015, page 31) cites the Wegrow report “Liberating the growth potential of women entrepreneurs in Latin America and the Caribbean, “www.ey.com/Publication/...reportes/.../EY-WeGrow-MIF-reportes-es.pdf):

1. 3 of 4 comes from enterprising families;
2. 3 of 4 has tertiary or university education;}
3. A 78% has children

We have to take into account that historically, the first businesses were mostly agricultural farms, where all the family worked. Much later, industrial revolution , beginning in the XVIIIth. Century, changed that structure, as mostly men went to work in the factories and the wives stood at home, taking care of the corresponding duties and child care, assuming dependent roles and being discriminated regarding academic training.

In our coaching practice with several dozens of coworking cases, we have collected the following empirical information:

1. Roughly , half of them reach success in both roles, and the conjoint endeavour reinforces their relationship, providing shared goals... dreams and problems to solve. The other half fails, mostly due to competitiveness and power fights, which frequently ruin also the marriage. So when the children of parents with this history are invited to start something together, the answer is “No way!” .

During a conference organized by our Iberian-American Family Business Institute with the Federation of Cargo Transport Owners in 2007, we asked an open question to the attendants: “How to you feel about working with one’s spouse?” ... whereby a typical response was: “I would never do that, it ruined our parents and our family!”. But the other was “I can only work with my wife”...and this started a lively and quite dramatic exchange.

2. Habitually, he produces the goods and she manages the company and the money

3. Competitiveness is more frequent when both parties share the same profession

According to data of the Entrepreneurs Center of our University of Flores in Buenos Aires , founded in 2006, of 100 new enterprises , only 30% remain standing after three years, and a 20% after five. This is quite regrettable, as most of them base their startups on family funds, and many of them hiring mortgages on their homes.

We have generated a questionnaire covering the fundamental skills and beliefs of our consultants, and offering training seminars in agreement with the Buenos Aires City Government , to empower the attendants for a better planning and future management.

An observation in our clinical practice related to male chauvinism is that in the Latin culture of Argentina, whose immigrants were influenced in the past by the Muslim occupation of part of Spain and Italy, men often resist the superiority of their spouses, academic or financial. So they fight them using the following options:

1. Attacking them, verbally or physically, producing a reduction of the manifestations of their talents. As the wives come from the same backgrounds, frequently they tolerate these abuses and keep their bond. In the language of

Transactional Analysis, they are part of a “game” , such as “*If it weren’t for him*”, “*Poor little me*” or, in the worst cases, “*Beat me, Daddy*”. In Argentina there is a femicide every 30 hours, usually beating or burning them alive, and the wives were also “programmed” to tolerate or discount early mistreatments, present since the very beginning of their relationship: their Life Scripts (the lid and the pot) are interactive.

2. “*Rubbing*” on them a younger and more attractive lover, to put down their self-esteem in this aspect

3. To become depressed, stop working or having an accident, producing dependency and putting the work burden on her, so reducing her growth.

4. Leaving the marriage and aggressing them through the children

5. Insisting in a pregnancy, which might limit the mother’s energy and development (of course, she has to agree in this decision)

The antipode and desideratum of these disgusting practices is the pride of sharing life with such a distinguished mate. Sometimes it is also observed, but depends of the degree of self-esteem of the husband.

National laws

“*Argentine women still suffer postponements in the work field*”

(Soledad Vallejos -www.lanacion.com.ar > Informacion general, 2011)

Even if they study more, they hold only a 34% of management jobs. In spite of the many advances in the field, the gap is still big, and the genre inequality persists in our country in many contexts, although a 30% more of

women attends tertiary and university studies. And a masculine CEO earns significantly more than his feminine counterpart (notas.org/2015/03/18/brecha-salarial-mujeres-ganan-menos-hombres/ March 2015) [tps://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_Argentina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_Argentina)

“Women in Argentina have attained a relatively high level of equality by Latin American standards, and in the Global Gender Gap Report prepared by the World Economic Forum in 2009, Argentine women ranked 24th among 134 countries studied in terms of their access to resources and opportunities relative to men.^[2] They enjoy comparable levels of education, and somewhat higher school enrollment ratios than their male counterparts. They are well integrated in the nation's cultural and intellectual life, though less so in the nation's economy. Their economic clout in relation to men is higher than in most Latin American countries, however,¹and numerous Argentine women hold top posts in the Argentine corporate world; among the best known are Cris Morena, owner of the television production company by the same name, María A. L. de Fortabat, former CEO and majority stakeholder of Loma Negra, the nation's largest cement manufacturer, Ernestina H. de Noble, director of Grupo Clarín, the premier media group in Argentina ([tps://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/women_in_Argentina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/women_in_Argentina))

The quota law

(<https://soydondenopienso.wordpress.com/.../1991-ley-de-cupo-femenino>. Accessed november 15, 2015)

This law, promulgated in 1991, demanding a minimum of 30% of female candidates for legislative positions , surpassed the expectations of its own promoters, with the Argentine Congress as the first in the world applying such initiative.

And 24 years later, our country is the greatest exponent of feminine representation in the Latin - American region, as well as one of the few in the world where the top executive authority is exerted by a woman... till her replacement, from December 10 this year, by Mauricio Macri, leader of the opposition since 2007.

But, when women enter as a minority in a context where they were excluded historically, they might face severe difficulties when they propose new issues, or they intervene in the regulations of the budget. ([https://www.facebook.com/ELA-Equipo-Latinoamericano-de Justicia-y Género](https://www.facebook.com/ELA-Equipo-Latinoamericano-de-Justicia-y-Género)). *“So, their mere presence does not assure the equality of opportunities, treatment and results”*.

The percentage is similar at the provinces, where 15% of the Ministries and the 26% of the secretariats are run by women, since 2010. Also, since their permanence they have obtained the approval of several

genre-related laws, such as reproductive health, the integral law of violence (in view of the many femicides, one every 30 hours, presently).

Also, integral sexual education, as well as the debate of topics related to human rights, specially the ones of girls and adolescents. So, men tend more to face issues as the financial, meanwhile women focus principally on the social and the cultural. Doubtlessly, again, as a continuation of their traditional roles.

Although, not all women entering the Congress do it with a genre agenda, as well as some men who accompany it but others who are refractory (www.losandes.com.ar/.../argentina-entre-paises-alto-nivel-mujeres-cargos...).

Now, in Argentina the forbidden dominion for dames is represented traditionally by the single masculine leadership which holds sway in the powerful trade unions with very few exceptions. And this constituted an ongoing power play between organized labor and the centralized authority of the last President Cristina, and not only due to their economic demands. So, some time before his designation, President Macri had initiated personal contacts with those forces.

Corporate Governance Code

“Argentina received worldwide praise for its decision to impose a political quota that resulted in greater participation of women in local politics. This affirmative step did not go so far as to impact the role of women in other aspects of Argentine society, including the labor market. As the ELA observed, “While the quota applying to legislative positions establishes a minimum of 30 percent participation of women to ensure the exercise of democracy, the[analysis shows that this minimum is far from the norm in other areas.

Unfortunately, no similar government action specifically supports the role of women in executive leadership in public or private corporations. While Argentina does have a voluntary Corporate Governance Code, it does not contain any provisions addressing gender equity in the boardroom”.

The Corporate Governance Code was adopted under General Resolution No. 516/2007 of the Argentine Securities Commission (Comisión Nacional de Valores). While the Code is voluntary, it imposes a reply or explain disclosure obligation requiring listed companies to include with their annual report a separate report on their level of compliance with the voluntary Code and how they are achieving its recommendations. The purpose of the Code and the reporting requirement is to further the goals of enhancing transparency in Argentine companies, imposing greater responsibility on directors and managers, and ensuring equitable treatment of minority shareholders.

The Trend Toward Gender Equality

Although the Code is only a recent initiative and may be the impetus for further regulation of Argentine companies, it appears that there is only nominal focus on gender equality in corporate board rooms in Argentina at this time. However, there have been small steps by individual Argentine corporations, as well as a few recent legal developments that indicate a trend favoring gender equality in Argentina that may soon result in gender equality initiatives for corporate board rooms.

In 2009, the Argentine legislature passed the Comprehensive Protection Act to prevent violence and discrimination against women in all areas of a woman's life.²⁴ The law is aimed at multiple facets of inequality, including discrimination in the workplace, that threatens a woman's access to employment, recruitment, promotion, and job stability through change in marital status and pregnancy.²⁵ Not only does this legislation carry penalties for acts of discrimination, but its presence promotes awareness of the obstacles faced by women in the labor market. This recent legislation seems to indicate a general shift to greater involvement of the government in gender equality issues in private employment. For example, although judicial decisions do not hold precedential value in Argentina, two recent cases indicate the judiciary's willingness to play a more aggressive role in promoting gender equality. In *Women in Equality Foundation et. al. c/ Freddo S.A.*, the Court of Buenos Aires (el Corte de Justicia de Buenos Aires) determined that a company's preference for hiring men violated the law and, as a result, the company would be required to hire women to reasonably and fairly correct that inequality. This case marked the first instance in which the judiciary in Argentina sought to impose a type of affirmative action to address discrimination.

More recently, the Court of Salta (la Corte de Justicia de Salta) imposed a quota on professional driver (chauffeur) collectives in the city after finding that the complete absence of women in the industry was a product of gender discrimination. The Court required that 30 percent of driver positions must be reserved for women and that failure to meet the quota would result in penalty. The decision was later vacated by the Court of Appeals following the determination that the lack of women in the industry was not based on actual discrimination. The decision is currently being appealed to the Supreme Court of Argentina. These two cases are the first instances in which any branch of the government has required gender parity in private enterprise and threatened to impose penalties for a company's failure to meet those requirements. Although these cases are not binding upon other companies (because Argentina operates under a civil law system), they indicate that the government, particularly the judiciary, is now willing

to impose equality requirements on private corporations. These decisions may force a change in the country's social climate and male-dominated work culture (Kessler, M. , 2011).

The Legal Framework

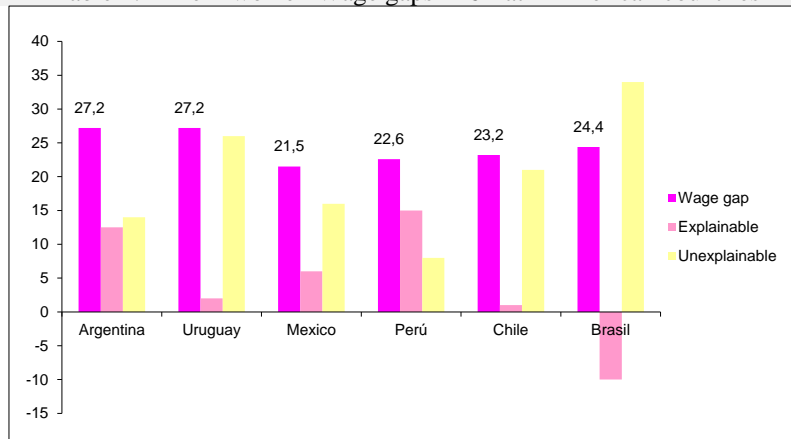
Argentina has a strong foundation in labor law and other laws promoting equality for women in the labor market. The Argentine Constitution provides for equality in access to work and employment for all people, without specifically mentioning women.

The primary source of labor law in Argentina is National Law No. 20.744, Ley de Contrato de Trabajo (Law of Contract of Employment) passed in 1975. Title VII of Law No. 20.744 provides a number of specific rights for women, including protection against termination for change in marital status and pregnancy, provisions for child care leave, and prohibitions on women working from home so that women are not required to work instead of caring for children. Unfortunately, these legal protections often have an opposite effect in the workforce. For example, an employer is required to provide a woman with paid maternity leave both 45 days before and 45 days after the birth of her child and is required to keep the woman's job open in anticipation of her return.

In the corporate context, the obstacles women face in management may be more a matter of discrimination in hiring than in promotion, as women are discouraged from entering the workforce in the first place. The Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género (The Latin American Team of Justice and Gender, ELA), an organization that supports gender equality, reports that only 4.4 percent of applicants to large corporations are women

Opportunities in the job place

Table 1. 1 Men- women Wage gaps in 6 Latin American countries



Source: International Labour Organization 2012/ 2013

“Gender equity initiatives are achieving noticeable success in certain areas. The following statistics demonstrate the amazing progress women are making towards equity in Argentina:

-Women in the workplace earn 98 percent of what men do in Argentina, while Nicaraguan women earn 64 percent, and Brazilians and Chileans earn just 77 percent of that of men.

-Illiteracy rates of Argentine men is 3.1 percent, while women illiteracy rates is almost equal at 3.2 percent.

-The percentage of female representation in the Argentine National Legislature has grown from 4.3 percent in 1983, 5.9 percent in 1992, 14 percent in 1993, and 33.7 percent in 2005.

-Argentina was the first Latin American country to adopt a quota law for women's participation in the Congress.

- The country is ranked 15th in the world for female participation in national legislation.

The statistics paint a picture of positive growth; however, this does not negate the fact that women are denied certain basic rights—particularly in lesser educated, underserved communities.

The rise of social movements resulting from the people's protest against the harsh conditions of the 2001 economic crisis contributed to the rise of solidarity between women. With the disappearances of thousands of men in working positions, women stepped up in response and defended their families. Similarly, the loss of income due to the 2001 crisis required both men and women to contribute to the family income. Both these factors motivated women to take leadership roles in many of the grassroots movements igniting throughout the country. FSD (Foundation for Sustainable Development) seeks to promote this coalition and solidarity movement of women by giving these groups the resources and skills they need to grow exponentially. Most women's groups need capacity-building activities, organization assistance, technical assistance, aid in promotion and marketing, and encouragement through solidarity with international women's support mechanisms. (www.fsdinternational.org/country/argentina/we issues)

Our continent registers the highest proportion of feminine chiefs of state (5), ministers (22,9%) an parliamentarians (25,7%), as per data of june 2014... far away from the 50% parity. After the last elections, Argentina reached 5 women governors of 24 districts (Perez, P, 2015)

“Private companies and non-profit organizations are undertaking efforts to achieve gender equity in the private sector. For example, the World Bank recently partnered with eleven large corporations, including Coca-Cola Argentina, Avon Argentina, and Wal-Mart Argentina, to design and implement a program focused on gender equity. The program targeted

gender equity in human resources policies, such as recruitment, promotion, and training, as well as professional development, work-life balance policies, sexual harassment, and a non-sexist company image. A survey of the participating companies revealed that only one had a stated commitment to equality in hiring, while eight companies advertised jobs with age, sex, and attractiveness requirements and four performed discriminatory tests as part of the interview process” .

The program required, and achieved, corrective steps in all of these areas.

The country’s achievements in gender equality in the corporate arena, however, have not been as impressive. In a recent analysis of gender equality worldwide, the Global Gender Gap Report rated Argentina only a 4.09 out of a 7-point rating system for women’s ability to rise to leadership positions in business. The greatest obstacle against women’s advancement in the business sector in Argentina appears to be rooted in the male-dominated work culture, rather than the legal landscape.

This situation might be aggravated when the husbands, parents or other relatives behave enviously or competitively, which is relatively frequent in the Latin culture.

Prospectives

The government elected in November 2015 offers new opportunities, as the country has not grown in the last four years, the credit is too expensive and the international exchange is stagnant due to the “snare” or currency exchange control, which only consequence is the lack of dollars in the market. The new government eliminated this obstacle to grow in his first days, in December 2015.

A recent initiative of Congress Deputy Soledad Carrizo (<http://www.parlamentario.com/noticia-87736.html>) proposed a minimum of a 30% feminine quota for cooperatives and mutuals, without this limiting a maximum, and stating that *“The social and political participation of women has been and is considered as a central strategy for the building of equity of genre and the deepening of democracy, and is undoubtedly and advance in this sense”*

On the other hand, in her report for the United Nations on poverty and genre violence in 2015, (La Nacion, October 21, 2015) the statistician Harumi Shibata Salazar commented the lack of data in several countries, including Argentina, as the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses last data on poorness exposed a 4, 7%, meanwhile the Observatory of Social Debt of the Catholic University confirms between 29 and 33%. The new government reported the substitution of present officers of the mentioned Institute, taking back the previous technicians, and to publish updated and

dependable data, as well as acting with all the available resources to arrive to “zero poverty” in Argentina.

And several non-profit organizations, such as “*Voces Vitales*” (Vital Voices), affiliated to Vital Voices Global Partnership, FEIM (Foundation for the Study and Research on Women), Asociación Aquí Estamos Nosotras - (Association Here are We), CENDOC Women, Ciudadanas (Citizens), Fundación Instituto de la Mujer (Foundation Institute of the Women) and many others, believe in the transforming value of the feminine participation in the society. This approach is sustained on studies of organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Development Bank , which showed that to invest in the development of women is the most effective measure to reduce poverty, improve health and education and with it, to improve general wellbeing

And, according to Paula Sandoval (2015); .

Conclusion

(Kessler, M., op. cit.,[ps://www.paulhastings.com/.../argentina.html](http://www.paulhastings.com/.../argentina.html)):

“Although Argentina still has social and culture obstacles to overcome, its evolving legal system and private sector initiatives seem to indicate that the country is taking valuable steps toward greater gender parity in the workforce. Because gender disparities in Argentina are greatest in the hiring process, it may be some time before the effects of these initiatives are reflected in the boardrooms of large companies.”

And, according to Paula Sandoval (2015), “*Countries that by 2030 want to keep a solid and constant rhythm of economic growth, besides the creation of the necessary quantity and quality of jobs, must wager for the education, training and inclusion of women in the labor market*”

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